Journalology

A brief history of injury and accident prevention publications

I B Pless

The future looks bright as *Injury Prevention* embarks on its second decade of publication

A search of the Web of Science using ''injury prevention'' OR ''accident prevention'' as my search terms turned up what may be the first such paper to be published in the peer reviewed literature. This paper, entitled ''Accident prevention'' appeared in the *American Journal of Public Health* in 1946.[1] Although a few other papers followed over the next few years, figure 1 clearly shows that it was only in the 1990s that the field really took off. By the end of this decade, the number of publications may well reach 2000.

Being first—or at least quick off the mark—has great merit, but in today's world it carries much less weight than how often an author is cited. Thus, with the help of Eugene Garfield's latest creation, Histcite, I was able to identify the top 10 most cited injury prevention papers. (E Garfield, personal communication)[2 3] These are shown in table 1. I remind the reader that the search only identified papers with either of the combined terms in the title, keywords, abstract, etc. Thus some key contributions have undoubtedly been missed. A further limitation is that Web of Science is not as complete as Medline, nor, in the case of some journals, as up to date. Nevertheless, the contents of the table are interesting and informative.

Among other elements, I was surprised to see that all these were papers published during the 1990s but not surprised to learn that half addressed topics related to children.

MOST CITED AUTHORS

From the search I discovered that of the 1428 papers in my database, the most frequently cited authors were S Gallagher and B Guyer. I am reasonably certain it was the group of papers describing the results of their landmark Statewide Childhood Injury Prevention Program (SCIPP) that accounts for their popularity. Barlow and Durkin followed, largely on the basis of the Harlem and North Manhattan papers shown in table 1. The late Lizette Peterson-Homer (1951–2002), a psychologist, and the ever present Fred Rivara, occupied the fifth and sixth positions respectively. Bringing up the remainder of the top 10 were Finison and Goodenough, Nakamura, and Davidson. How often were they cited? Gallagher and Guyer had about 300 ''global'' citations (that is, anywhere in the Web of Science); Nakamura had just under 200; and Davidson at the bottom of the top 10 had 180.

MOST PUBLISHED AUTHORS

Another dimension I explored is the ranking of the most prolific authors in the injury/accident prevention domain. D Kendrick with 18 publications, followed by L Peterson-Homer, C Runyan,

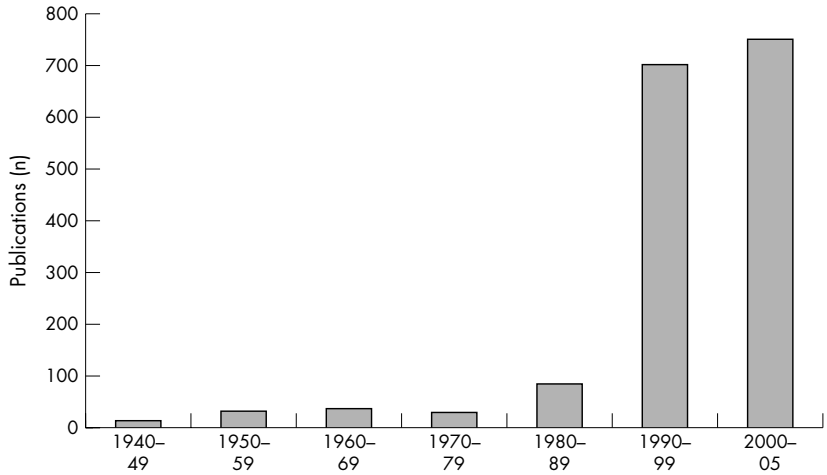

Figure 1 Number of publications in the field of injury prevention, 1940–2005.

Table 1 Most frequently cited papers addressing injury prevention or accident prevention: 1945–2005

Author	Title	Journal	Citations
1. Speechley M, Tinetti M	Falls and injuries in frail and vigorous community elderly persons	*J Am Geriatr Soc* 1991;**39**:46–52	136
2. Thurman DJ, Alverson C, Dunn KA, Guerrero J, Sniezek JE	Traumatic brain injury in the United States: A public health perspective	*J Head Trauma Rehabil* 1999;**14**:602–15	109
3. Stout N, Bell C	Effectiveness of source documents for identifying fatal occupational injuries—a synthesis of studies	*Am J Public Health* 1991;**81**:725–8	88
4. Litovitz T, Manoguerra A	A comparison of pediatric poisoning hazards—an analysis of 3.8 million exposure incidents	*Pediatrics* 1992;**89**:999–1006	83
5. Cote TR, Sacks JJ, Lambert-Huber DA, Dannenberg AL, Kresnow MJ, *et al.*	Bicycle helmet use among Maryland children-effect of legislation and education	*Pediatrics* 1992;**89**:1216–20	76
6. Davidson LL, Durkin MS, Kuhn L, O'Connor P, Barlow B, *et al.*	The impact of the safe kids healthy neighborhoods Injury Prevention Program in Harlem, 1988 through 1991	*Am J Public Health* 1994;**84**:580–6	66
7. Durkin MS, Davidson LL, Kuhn L, O'Connor P, Barlow B	Low-income neighborhoods and the risk of severe pediatric injury—a small-area analysis in Northern Manhattan	*Am J Public Health* 1994;**84**:587–92	66
8. Gielen AC, O'Campo PJ, Faden RR, Kass NE, Xue X	Interpersonal conflict and physical violence during the childbearing year	*Soc Sci Med* 1994;**39**:781–7	63
9. Kellermann AL, Lee RK, Mercy JA	The epidemiologic basis for the prevention of firearm injuries	*Ann Rev Public Health* 1991;**12**:17–40	54
10. Backx FJG, Beijer HJM, Bol E, Erich WBM	Injuries in high-risk persons and high-risk sports—a longitudinal-study of 1818 school-children	*Am J Sports Med* 1991;**19**:124–30	53

Table 2 Ranking of the 10 journals publishing the most injury/accident prevention papers, 1945–2005

Rank	Journal	TGCS*	Publications
1	*Pediatrics*	1155	93
2	*Accident Analysis and Prevention*	282	54
3	*Journal of Trauma*	460	46
4	*Injury Prevention*	78	41
5	*Public Health Reports*	150	41
6	*Safety Science*	135	36
7	*American Journal of Preventive Medicine*	185	27
8	*Academic Emergency Medicine*	200	26
9	*Journal of Safety Research*	52	26
10	*British Journal of Sports Medicine*	193	25

*Total Global Citation Score—the citation frequency based on the total count in the Web of Science.

B Barlow, C Finch, F Rivara, L Schelp, J Langley, D Chalmers, and G Smith, head the list. Each of these top 10 have between 11 and 15 publications in this database. (Note that eight of these are, or have been, members of the editorial board of *Injury Prevention*!)

MOST CITED JOURNALS

Although this has been noted previously in another context,[4] I was curious to learn in which journals these papers most often appeared and how often papers in those journals are cited. The Global Citation Score shown in the table 2 indicates that *Pediatrics* followed by *Journal of Trauma* are the most cited. However, the list is sorted by number of publications meeting the search criteria published in each journal over the period since 1945. Although it appears that *Pediatrics*, *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, and the *Journal of Trauma* come ahead of *Injury Prevention*, this is an artifact. It stems from the fact that papers in *Injury Prevention* have only been archived in the Web of Science for the past four years. If we add all the other papers we have published since the journal began in 1995, our total of peer reviewed original articles would be over 500, putting us well in the lead.

Calling attention to the pace setting role of *Injury Prevention* is, of course, one of the purposes of this editorial. Another purpose is to express my gratitude. As we embark on our second decade of publication, there is much reason for satisfaction from the data uncovered by this exercise. Everyone—our authors, reviewers, editorial board and, above all, Alex Williamson and the BMJ Publishing Group—once again deserve our thanks and that of others in this field.

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Reed Elsevier

For the record: journal publishers and the arms trade

I B Pless

Promoting the international arms trade is incompatible with medical publishing's values

Of all journals that should not conceivably have any sort of formal or informal association with the facilitation of violence, especially violence involving civilians, *Injury Prevention* must head the list. In light of revelations regarding the involvement of the giant publisher Reed Elsevier with the arms industry, we want to assure our readers and contributors that our publishers, the BMJ Publishing Group, have no such links.

Reed Elsevier owns the *Lancet* along with hundreds of other medical journals. Last September, it staged what has been described as ''the world's largest arms fair''—Defence Systems and Equipment International (DSEi). A letter to the *Lancet* notes that ''Military buyers are from some of the world's most serious human-rights-abusing regimes''. And that ''there is a demonstrable lack of effective regulation at these events''.[1 2] We concur with the proposition ''Professionals and practitioners who use Reed Elsevier's numerous medical and biomedical publications hold to principles that include, at their most basic, the maxim to 'do no harm'.''

This relationship might be of less concern if arms sales only involved the military, or if only ''conventional'' weapons were being sold—although in the end, all weapons in any hands are designed for no other reason than to kill or maim. They have resulted in countless deaths and immense disability in the name of justice. In the case of cluster bombs, their legacy can be horrendous; the victims are all too often civilians, not soldiers. Further, it would be naïve to assume none of what is sold ever finds its way into the hands of terrorists.

Journals that espouse the prevention of injuries and violence have a moral obligation to take a stand on issues such as this. Hence, I fully concur with the conclusion of the letter ''As researchers, scientists, medical professionals, and campaigners concerned about the damaging effects of the arms trade on the health and well-being of many populations, we call on Reed Elsevier to end its international promotion of the arms trade.'' The *Lancet* also agrees: ''On behalf of our readers and contributors, we respectfully ask Reed Elsevier to divest itself of all business interests that threaten human, and especially civilian, health and well-being … Values of harm reduction and science-based decision making are the core of public-health practice. Certain military technologies that Reed Elsevier has allowed to be showcased at DESi are contrary to these values.''[3]

Issues such as this are rarely clear cut and there may well be situations that warrant the use of arms to fight oppression. The purpose of this commentary, however, is not to debate what those situations might be, but to call attention to the unacceptable relationship between a publisher of medical journals and the promotion of arms sales.

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